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SECURITY INFORMATION

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

9 April 1953

SUBJECT: SE-43: REACTIONS OF THE NON-COMMUNIST WORLD TO
CURRENT COMMUNIST TACTICS
(Draft for Board Consideration)

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the effects of current Communist "peace" tactics on the peoples and governments of the non-Communist world, and the probable courses of action which the major non-Communist countries may pursue in response to those tactics.

DISCUSSION

1. The Communist shift to "peace" tactics has been manifest for so brief a period that there is as yet little evidence on which to base an estimate of the effects upon the peoples and governments of the non-Communist world. The initial public reactions range from hopeful to guardedly optimistic, while for the most part the reactions of governments and political leaders have been tentative

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and cautious. Any estimate of the eventual effects on the non-Communist world must therefore be provisional.

2. The vulnerability of the non-Communist world to "peace" tactics has been acknowledged in previous estimates. Concessions on the POW issue sufficient to bring about an armistice in Korea, combined with minor concessions elsewhere and a steady flow of propaganda gestures and statements, would be well calculated to play upon this vulnerability. The death of Stalin, an event long anticipated in the West as likely to herald decisive changes in Kremlin policy, tends to lend credibility to the new tactics. Moreover, Western governments are presently confronted with such problems as latent disagreements over possible US measures to end the Korean war, the stagnation of negotiations over the terms on which West Germany is to be admitted into the Western coalition, and economic strains attendant upon efforts to raise defense programs to higher levels, all of which would make them responsive to any suggestion of a genuine moderation of the cold war. The moment is one, therefore, in which the response of Western governments and peoples to Kremlin overtures might be calculated to be the most favorable.

3. The eventual reactions of non-Communist peoples and governments will probably depend in large measure upon the manner of the US response to the new Communist tactics. Should the US response

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be seen abroad as adamantly negative, there would tend to be a decline in the willingness of other states to follow US leadership. If the US seemed inclined to reduce its defense effort and its aid to its allies, the latter could be expected to make similar and perhaps greater retrenchments. If, however, the US attitude was thought to be one of willingness to negotiate while at the same time not relaxing its military readiness and defensive posture, the non-Communist world would be likely to continue responsive to US leadership. In this event, the chances of forestalling what is almost certainly a primary aim of the new Communist tactics, to isolate the US from its allies, would appear to be good.

4. Nevertheless, if an armistice in Korea does result, and if other conciliatory moves in Europe such as an end to the harassment of Berlin or an Austrian peace treaty, follow, the governments of Western Europe which depend upon shifting parliamentary majorities may have increasing difficulty in sustaining their defense programs and in following US leadership. The effectiveness of Communist parties may increase as they develop united front tactics and seek to associate with themselves in "peace" fronts those non-Communist elements which are pacifist, hostile to the US, or opposed to the association of a re-armed West Germany with the West. The French government would probably be the most exposed in this respect, and in Italy the De Gasperi government might be so handicapped as to

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make preservation of its narrow margin 25X6A center party support in
the forthcoming elections doubtful.



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6. Probably the most immediate danger to the relations of the US with its allies would arise over such issues as might be raised in the Far East pursuant to an armistice in Korea. It is possible that the US might not find ready support for its views on a final political settlement in Korea, on the future of Formosa and the Chinese National Government, on Communist China's admission to the UN, and on trade with Communist China. If these issues remained unsettled while the Communist "peace" tactics were continued, or if they appeared to be a bar to the settlement of pressing issues elsewhere, the US might find its leadership of the Western coalition impaired.

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8. If Kremlin proposals on disarmament are included in the new tactics we do not believe that they are likely to find a response in non-Communist countries or divide the Western allies unless and until settlements of the major political issues outstanding between East and West have been achieved.

9. The abandonment by the Communist Bloc of its aggressive tactics toward the non-Communist world would probably have little effect in the Middle East states, where the importance of the East-West struggle is overshadowed by the more immediate problems posed by the Palestine dispute and relations with the West. The Communist shift in tactics would be felt chiefly through changes which might eventually take place in the policies of the US and its Western allies toward the Middle East states. In any event, it is unlikely that current Middle Eastern problems would be greatly aggravated or brought much nearer to solution in consequence of the new Communist tactics.

10. Some realignment of the policies of member states in the UN would doubtless result from an easing of East-West tensions. There would probably be an increasing tendency for smaller powers to act in concert against the larger, and closer alignment of the Arab-Asian and Latin American blocs might be one consequence. India would be likely to feel that its neutralist role had been vindicated and might be even less disposed to associate itself with the West on future issues which might arise between the Communist and non-Communist worlds.

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